enter on a contest with us for maritime supremacy. In past times we have had to fight Holland, Spain, and France for this supremacy, and personally I am convinced that sooner or later we shall have to repeat the same struggle with Germany. If we could k<?ep France and Russia on our side, it would be well" ' .

Grey replied that it was impracticable to change our agreements into alliances : " The feeling here about definite commitment to a Continental war on unforeseeable conditions would be too dubious to permit us to make an alliance. Russia too must make her internal government less reaction- ary. Till she does, liberal sentiment here will remain very cool, and even those who are not sentimental will not believe that she can purge her administration sufficiently to become a strong and reliable Power. Meanwhile let us keep an entente with Russia in the sense of keeping in touch, so .that our diplomatic action may be in accord and in mutual support." Grey knew; the sentiments of the House of Commons and Nicolson did not.

One of the obvious reasons against turning the Triple' Entente into a Triple Alliance was that it would confirm the German fear of encirclement and ruin any chance of recon- ciliation with Berlin. Grey was never very sanguine about a rapprochement, and the first Morocco crisis had emphasized the tragic impossibility of being .real friends with France and Germany at the same time. Moreover he profoundly dis- trusted Billow, and, like the rest of us, he had no exalted opinion of the wisdom of William II. Yet he never abandoned hope of a tolerable relationship, and our sixth volume is the record of his attempts to obtain it. In 1908 we made the first and kst formal proposal to abate the naval rivalry which was getting on our nerves. Sir Charles Hardinge,

who^accom-
panied the King to Cronberg, was instructed to have a frank
talk with the Kaiser. " If the German fleet ever becomes
superior to ours," ran the Foreign Office memorandum
drawn up for his guidance, " the German army can conquer
this country. There is no corresponding risk of this kind to
Germany ; for however superior our fleet, no naval victory
would bring us any nearer Berlin/* There was no need for a
formal agreement. " If it could be shown that, as a result of
the interview between the two sovereigns, a slackening of
activity in the building programmes of the two navies had
ensued, there is no doubt that the state of unrest prevailing